

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
DODE-00 /059 R

DRAFTED BY OSD/ISA:HDUNLOP;EUR/RPM:EREHFELD
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:HAHOLMES
OSD/ISA:GEN.BOWMAN

-----230703Z 049961 /17

R 230223Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BONN
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064177

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, OCON, AWACS, MILI, GW

SUBJECT: NATO AEW DEMONSTRATION TO MOD LEBER

REF: STATE 60506 DTG 180600Z MAR 77

1. ON MARCH 16, 1977, GENERAL JONES, CSAF, HOSTED
MINISTER LEBER AND HIS PARTY AT ANDREWS AFB FOR A TELE-
VISION DOWNLINK DEMONSTRATION OF THE AWACS "BIG PICTURE"
AND AN ONBOARD TOUR OF THE AWACS. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES
HIGHLIGHTS FROM GEN. JONES' EXCHANGES WITH MINISTER LEBER
AND REFLECTS THE BASICALLY POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS AWACS
WITH WHICH LEBER LEFT WASHINGTON (SEE REFTEL).

2. GENERAL JONES CONDUCTED THE PRESENTATION, WHICH
FOCUSED ON THE "BIG PICTURE" POTENTIAL OF THE AWACS DISPLAY
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WHEN DOWNLINKED BY TV TO POLITICAL AND MILITARY DECISION
CENTERS. IN ADDITION TO THE MILITARY AND TECHNICAL
ASPECTS OF AWACS' WARNING AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS, GEN.
JONES OBSERVED THAT A FAR BROADER APPLICATION IS AWACS'
ABILITY TO PROVIDE SENIOR POLITICAL, AS WELL AS MILITARY,
DECISION-MAKERS TIMELY, ACCURATE, AND INTEGRATED INFORMA-
TION ON WHAT IS HAPPENING DURING TENSION, CRISIS OR

CONFLICT. HE RECALLED THAT ONE OF HIS BIGGEST CONCERNS AS A SENIOR NATO AIR COMMANDER HAD BEEN THE FRAGMENTATION AND

SCARCITY OF INFORMATION CONDUITS WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN NEEDED BY NATO POLITICAL AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AND SELECT APPROPRIATE NATO ACTION. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE WAS ALWAYS A WORRY OF POSSIBLE OVER-REACTION OR UNDER-REACTION BY THE ALLIANCE DURING A CRISIS, WITH THE ATTENDANT IMPLICATIONS FOR STABILITY, PROPER ALERT STATUS, REINFORCEMENT, AND THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD. MINISTER LEBER SUGGESTED THAT THE ARGUMENT ON THE UTILITY OF THE AWACS FOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY DECISION MAKING IS A VERY STRONG POINT IN FAVOR OF NATO AEW. HE FELT THIS PARTICULAR LINE OF ARGUMENT HAD NOT BEEN WELL ARTICULATED BEFORE AND SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED.

3. DURING THE TV DOWNTOLL DEMONSTRATION, AWACS WAS AIRBORNE, TRANSMITTING A REAL TIME CONSOLE PICTURE WHICH WAS DISPLAYED ON A TV RECEIVER SET UP IN THE BRIEFING AREA. GENERAL JONES COMMUNICATED DIRECTLY WITH THE AWACS CONSOLE OPERATOR, DIRECTING CHANGES IN SCOPE SCALE AND DEMONSTRATING THE AREA COVERAGE, TRACK INITIATION AND CODED BEACON CAPABILITIES OF THE SYSTEM. HERR LEBER ASKED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING PHYSICAL VULNERABILITY AND RESISTANCE TO ECM WHICH WERE ANSWERED TO HIS SATISFACTION.

4. GENERAL JONES ALSO EMPHASIZED THE FORCE-MULTIPLIER BENEFIT FOR THE ALLIANCE OF THE E-3 AWACS SYSTEM. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS REGARD, AN OPERATIONAL AWACS WOULD INCREASE EXISTING AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS CAPABILITIES (BOTH MISSILE AND AIR-CRAFT). IN ADDITION, GENERAL JONES POINTED OUT THE INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS OF OFFENSIVE FORCES WHICH NATO COULD OBTAIN THROUGH PROPER UTILIZATION OF AWACS IN A FLUID BATTLE ENVIRONMENT. THE POLITICAL BENEFITS OF A NATO AEW SYSTEM AS A SYMBOL OF NATO SOLIDARITY WAS ALSO STRESSED.

5. MINISTER LEBER CONVEYED TO GEN. JONES THAT HE PROPOSED TO DEFEND AWACS ON THE BASIS OF FOUR LINES OF ARGUMENT:

A) THE UTILITY OF NATO AEW DATA FOR DECISION MAKING BY POLITICAL AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS;

B) THE UTILITY OF THE E-3A IN AN AIR DEFENSE ROLE AS A

MULTIPLIER WITH A DEEP LOOK EARLY ALERT TYPE OF

CAPABILITY;

C) THE ENHANCED EFFECTIVENESS OF OFFENSIVE FORCES WHICH NATO COULD OBTAIN THROUGH PROPER UTILIZATION OF THE CONTROL CAPABILITIES OF THE AWACS WHEN DEPLOYED IN AN ONGOING BATTLE ENVIRONMENT;

D) NATO AEW AS A SYMBOL OF NATO SOLIDARITY AND WOULD BE SEEN BY MANY AS THE FIRST MAJOR OPPORTUNITY SINCE NADGE TO BRING THE ALLIES TOGETHER INTO A JOINTLY FUNDED AND OPERATED MULTI-NATIONAL DEFENSE EFFORT. IF CONSUMMATED, THIS EFFORT WOULD RESULT IN A CAPABILITY/SYSTEM WHICH WOULD BENEFIT ALL PARTICIPATING NATIONS AND WOULD BEAR TESTIMONY TO THE CONTINUED VITALITY OF THE ALLIANCE, ACCORDING TO MINISTER LEBER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AWACS, REPORTS, AIR DEFENSE, WARNING SYSTEMS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), EXHIBITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE064177
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HDUNLOP;EUR/RPM:EREHFELD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770099-0115
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770330/aaaaaztz.tel
Line Count: 140
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4590aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 60506
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3021783
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATO AEW DEMONSTRATION TO MOD LEBER
TAGS: OCON, MILI, GE, US, NATO
To: NATO BRUSSELS BONN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4590aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009